

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 DOTE-00 PM-07

H-03 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 SY-10

USSS-00 SCA-01 FBIE-00 OC-06 CCO-00 RSR-01 /142 W

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R "2?023Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3847

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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BRUSSELS FOR FAA

E.O. 11652: N/A DECON 8/22/74

TAGS: ETRN, LE, SY, PINT

SUBJECT: ANTI-HIJACKING PASSENGERS PRE-SCREENING

REF: STATE A-5662

1. UNTIL NOV. 1972, PAN AM AND OTHER AIRLINE SECURITY PERSONNEL WERE ALLOWED PERFORM ELECTRONIC SCREENING AND PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF THEIR OWN PASSENGERS AND BAGGAGE AT BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. AT THAT TIME, LEBANESE GENDARMERIE TOOK OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING SUCH CHECKS ON ALL PASSENGERS, USING ELECTRONIC HAND SCANNERS AND PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF PERSONS AND CARRY-ON LUGGAGE. AIRPORT AUTHORITY ALSO HAS PURCHASED TWO BENDIX X-RAY MACHINES, ONE FOR CHECKED BAGGAGE AND ANOTHER FOR HAND BAGGAGE. FORMER HAS BEEN INSTALLED AT PAN AM

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DEPARTURE GATE, BUT IS NOT YET OPERATIVE. LATTER STILL IN PROCESS OF BEING INSTALLED, AND PAN AM HOPES OPERATE IT WITH OWN PERSONNEL WHEN INSTALLATION COMPLETED. AIRPORT AUTHORITY HAS ALSO INSTALLED SIX MAGNETOMETERS, AND PAN AM HAS ONE OF ITS OWN.

2. WE HAVE OBTAINED FOLLOWING PROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT RE EFFICACY OF BEIRUT AIRPORT SECURITY PRECAUTIONS (WHICH SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH DETAILED OBSERVATIONS CONTAINED OUR A-305 OF DEC 15, 1972): PHYSICAL INSPECTION OF CARRY-ON LUGGAGE IS ADEQUATE, BUT BODY SEARCHES ARE POOR. PASSENGERS ARE RARELY SEARCHED BELOW WAITST, AND FEMALES SELDOM UNDERGO BODY SEARCH AT ALL. USE OF ELECTRONIC SCREENING EQUIPMENT BY LEBANESE GENDARMES IS ALSO RATED AS POOR, SINCE MACHINES ARE SENSITIVE AND SELDOM KEPT IN PROPER ADJUSTMENT. MOREOVER, GENDARMERIE COMPETENCE IN THEIR USE LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED, DUE TO SCARCITY OF TRAINED PERSONNEL AND VAGARITIES OF THEIR ASSIGNMENT TO AIPORT DUTY. IN SUM, BEIRUT AIRPORT SECURITY IS NOT TOO GOOD, BUT IT HAS IMPROVED IN LAST 8 MONTHS TO POINT WHERE IT PROBABLY EXCEEDS THAT OF ANY OTHER AIRPORT (EXCEPT LOD AND AMMAN) IN ME.

3. RELATIONS BETWEEN PAN AM AND BEIRUT AIRPORT OFFICIALS ARE GOOD, ALTHOUGH PAN AM CONTINUES TO COMPLAIN ABOUT PERSONALITY PROBLEMS, MUDDLED AUTHORITY AND ILL-DEFINED LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY ON PART OF LEBANESE GOVT. BODIES CONCERNED WITH PROVIDING AIRPORT SECURITY (C.F., BEIRUT A-305). PAN AM OFFICIALS DO THEIR BEST TO MONITOR AND, WHEN POSSIBLE, TRAIN LEBANESE GENDARMERIE IN USE OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT, BUT EFFECTS OF SUCH EFFORTS ARE SPOTTY, AT BEST. ONE OTHER PROBLEM WHICH CAUSES CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO PAN AM OFFICIALS HERE IS GOL KN-SISTENCE, REAFFIRMED AS RECENTLY AS JUNE 13, ON EXEMPTING ALL RPT ALL HOLDERS OF DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS FROM BODY AND BAGGAGE SEARCHES AT AIRPORT. ASIDE TO DANGER THAT TERRORISTS TRAVELING ON ARAB DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS (BOGUS OR NOT) MIGHT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SECURITY LOOPHOLE, PAN AM FEARS IT MAY ALSO CAUSE COMPANY TO RUN AFOUL OF FAA REGULATIONS OUTLINED REPAIR. EFFORTS PERSUADE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES TO ABOLISH THIS RULING HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SO FAR BEEN UNAVAILING, ALTHOUGH PAN AM OFFICIALS HERE ARE STILL TRYING DRUM UP SUPPORT FOR SUCH ACTION AMONG OTHER FOREIGN CARRIERS SERVING BEIRAT.

4. AMBASSADOR RECENTLY RAISED PROBLEM OF AIRPORT SECURITY WITH LEBANSE MIN OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS WHO AGREED IMPORTANCE PROBLEM AND PROMISED LOOK

INTO MATTER PERSONALLY.

5. AS FOR DAMASCUS, PAN AM ESTIMATES THAT SECURITY AT DIA  
IS "PRETTY GOOD" AS RESULT OF SARG'S NORMAL POLICE-STATE  
METHODS. SYRIAN CUSTOMS CLOSELY EXAMINES ALL BAGGAGE,  
AND ANYONE BOARDING AN AIRCRAFT TO LEAVE SYRIA IS CAREFULLY  
SCREENED BY SYRIAN OFFICIALDOM.  
BUFFUM

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NNN

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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